

Objectives

The objectives for this session are to provide an opportunity for clergy and lay leaders to:

- (1) Craft stories about how learning is changing in their congregations to develop and support whole person learning and to help reach their respective priority goals; and
- (2) Identify opportunities to activate their leadership roles as advocates and culture changers within their congregations using their stories.

The Power of Stories

Turn to the person next to you and share your thoughts about the difference between sharing “facts” and sharing “stories.” Then list below what you see as the elements of each.

Facts	Stories

Appreciative Inquiry Interviews

Find a partner. Take turns interviewing each other, using the following questions. When you are asking the questions simply listen. This is an interview, *not* a dialogue. When the other person pauses, give them time to reflect or encourage them to tell you as much as they can by saying something like "tell me more" or "what else was happening." *Do* jot down notes while listening.

- (1) Think back over your experience as a learner at any point in your life. Tell me a story about a time when you experienced learning with your head, heart, hands, and soul. What happened? How did you feel? What made it different from other learning experiences?

- (2) Think back over your experience as a leader. Tell me a story about a time when you successfully advocated on behalf of something in which you believed deeply by using a story/stories. What happened? How did you feel? What role did the story play in your being effective in your advocacy?

DEBORAH HOWARD, Esq., M.S.O.D., founder of Guiding Change Consulting, is a writer, change catalyst and life-long learner who guides individuals, groups and organizations through positive transformation and change. She is dedicated to helping individuals, teams, and organizations maximize their potential, enhance their effectiveness, and create and maintain work environments that are inclusive and just. She has over ten years experience guiding leaders, teams, and organizations through issues of leadership, team building, conflict resolution, diversity, strategic planning and overall organization development. She provides consulting, facilitation, executive coaching, training, and other organization development and strategic services to a wide variety of clients including non-profit organizations, corporations, government agencies, hospitals, unions, educational institutions, legal services organizations, and foundations.

Her professional life began in the field of law. After receiving her Bachelor of Arts Degree from Harvard University, she went on to receive a law degree from Northeastern University School of Law. She went to law school with the goal of using the law to help create positive social change. After litigating in the public service area for a number of years both in Anchorage, Alaska and New York City, she became disillusioned with the adversarial process. Rather than taking sides in win-lose scenarios, she wanted to find ways to work with people to help them build and maintain connections. It was that desire that led her to return to school to receive her Masters Degree in Organization Development from American University/NTL.

Deborah’s experience also includes having lived, studied, and worked in Japan. While an undergraduate majoring in East Asian Studies, she spent one year at Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan where she studied Japanese language and culture. (She also earned her black belt in Judo while she was there.) After practicing law in Alaska, she returned to Japan to study law for a year and a half at Doshisha University in Kyoto through a fellowship awarded by the Japanese Ministry of Education. While there, she also worked part-time for a Japanese law firm in Osaka.

Her professional experience includes positions in government agencies, court systems, law firms, educational institutions, and non-profit organizations. Following law school, Deborah clerked at the Alaska Court of Appeals and was an Assistant Attorney General for Alaska’s Office of the Attorney General. She has also worked in private practice in Washington, D.C., as an Assistant Corporation Counsel for the City of New York Department of Law, as a legal recruiter, and as the Director of Career Services at New York Law School. While working as a diversity and organization development consultant, she became Project Director of the Law School Consortium Project. That project, funded by the Soros Foundation’s Open Society Institute, was designed to study and promote models for supporting solo practitioners in meeting the legal needs of low and moderate-income individuals and communities. As a former Director of this one-person-staffed national non-profit organization, she brings insight into and understanding of the challenges non-profits face in promoting important organizational missions with limited financial and human resources.

Deborah’s background and training also includes a Certificate in Culturally Competent Human Services from the Temple University Multicultural Research and Training Institute as well as coursework in human interaction and diversity at the NTL Institute for Applied Behavioral Science of which she is a member. Deborah is also the author of *Repairing the Quilt of Humanity: A Metaphor for Healing and Reparation* and publisher of guidingchange.org.blog.